

## **How can I keep my child safe while swimming?**

With the weather finally warming and school coming to an end, children are beginning to become excited about swimming. Parents are encouraged to not overestimate their child's swimming ability and awareness of water-survival skills. It's recommended that children over the age of 4 participate in swimming lessons taught by a qualified instructor. Young children should never be permitted to swim alone or play near a body of water without supervision. Older children are encouraged to swim with a buddy and should be educated about safety guidelines when swimming in a pool versus a lake or the ocean. Parents are encouraged to not allow their children to swim in areas with strong undertows, large waves, or without a lifeguard on duty. Inflatable toys and chairs should not be used as flotation devices. Life preservers are recommended when riding in boats or participating in water sports. For children under the age of 5, life preservers should have a flotation collar to keep your child's head upright and their face out of the water.

Backyard pools should be enclosed with a high fence and locked when not in use. If the pool contains a cover, remove it completely before swimming. Children should never be allowed to walk on the pool cover as there is potential for them to fall through and be trapped underneath. Shallow water is as dangerous for some children as deep water. For this reason, all water play should be supervised and toddler pools emptied when not being used.